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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application. Claims 1, 2 and 4-20 have been amended herein, new claims 34-42 have been added and claims 3 and 21 have been canceled.

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently amended) An electronic multiple supplier system for transacting business comprising[[;]]:

a central connection component ~~configured to provide~~ that provides a virtual forum to facilitate electronic communication between buyers and suppliers; and

at least one remote computer connected to the central connection component *via* a network, ~~wherein~~ at least one buyer employs the at least one computer to request, retrieve, and accept online bids that ~~contain~~ include a price curve for a product from ~~a plurality of~~ bidding suppliers, the price curve ~~specifying~~ specifies a unit price in tiers based on the total volume purchased,

the virtual forum displays in real time current low bids at each tier as the bids are retrieved.

2.   (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ the central connection component is a server.

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~3~~ 1, ~~wherein the central connection component is configured to display~~ the virtual forum displays a bidding supplier associated with each low bid.

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5   (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, ~~wherein the central connection component is configured to limit~~ the virtual forum limits the period during which bids can be accepted.

6.   (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ the virtual [[form]] forum is an Internet web page.

7.   (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ the virtual [[form]] forum is an Internet chat room.

8.   (Currently amended) A method of conducting electronic commerce comprising:

        requesting an online bid from ~~at least one supplier~~ a plurality of suppliers;

        receiving bids ~~submitted from at least one supplier~~ from bidding suppliers, ~~wherein~~ each bid ~~supplier specifies~~ specifying a price for which [[it]] the associated bidding supplier will sell a product at particular price points ~~that vary~~ varying as a function of ~~total products ordered~~ a quantity of the product;

        ~~determining~~ displaying in real time a lowest price bid at a respective price point as bids are received; and

        accepting a bid.

9.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising displaying ~~the current lowest price bid at each price point and~~ the respective bidding supplier associated with the lowest price bid.

10.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, ~~wherein~~ accepting the bid ~~is accepted~~ based on the lowest price.

11.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, ~~wherein~~ receiving bids ~~can only be submitted~~ during a limited period of time only.

12.   (Currently amended) The method of claim [[8]] 11, ~~wherein~~ a buyer specifies the ~~final~~ period of time in which ~~suppliers must submit~~ bids must be received.

13.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, ~~wherein the~~ a buyer specifies a ship date.

14.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, ~~wherein~~ accepting [[a]] the bid includes accepting a supplier for a fixed length of time.

15.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

determining the final price paid at the end of a time period;

calculating the average price paid per product; and

providing a rebate [[if]] when the ~~final~~ average price paid is not equal to the final price determined according to the volume of product purchased.

16.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, ~~wherein a~~ providing the rebate ~~is provided~~ to the supplier [[if]] when the average price paid is lower than the final price determined.

17.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, ~~wherein a~~ providing the rebate ~~is provided~~ to the buyer [[if]] when the average price paid is higher than the final price determined.

18.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 17, ~~wherein providing a~~ providing the rebate ~~includes~~ comprising not charging product fees until the rebate ~~amount owed~~ is recovered.

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19.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 17, ~~wherein providing a~~ providing the rebate ~~includes~~ comprising reducing a fee with a predetermined price floor established until the rebate ~~amount owed~~ is recouped.

20.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, ~~wherein providing a~~ providing the rebate ~~includes~~ comprising crediting an online account.

21.   (Canceled)

22.   (Withdrawn) A method of transacting business electronically comprising:

establishing a dealroom for transacting business among buyers and suppliers;

requesting suppliers of a desired product to complete and submit an online bid form posted in the dealroom;

receiving a completed bid form from at least one supplier; and

accepting a bid.

23.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22, wherein the online bid form contains a price schedule specifying cost per unit tiers such that the price paid per unit varies with the total volume purchased.

24.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22, further comprising displaying the lowest price bid by particular suppliers at each price tier.

25.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22, wherein suppliers must be registered view the posted online bid form.

26.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23, wherein the bid form contains further details

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regarding the bid including one of shipping date, time period of the offer, and total quantity that must be available for purchase.

27.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein the supplier makes changes to details regarding the bid and submits them for a buyer's review.

28.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22, wherein accepting a bid comprises accepting the bid of the supplier with the lowest unit price at a particular tier corresponding to the desired quantity to be purchased.

29.   (Withdrawn) A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer executable instructions for carrying out the method of claim 22.

30.   (Withdrawn) A method for transacting commerce electronically comprising:
        establishing an electronic forum for conducting business transactions;

        sending requests to registered suppliers of the forum to sign on and complete an electronic bid form which includes a price curve indicating prices the supplier is willing to sell products at for particular volumes purchased;

        receiving at least one bid from a multitude of suppliers;

        accepting a bid from a supplier to supply goods for a specific period of time;

        placing at least one order for a particular quantity of product;

        paying for the products as they are received;

        determining the appropriate volume price per unit of product according to the price curve and the total volume purchased;

        calculating the average price paid per unit; and

        rebating any overage paid corresponding to the difference between the volume price per unit and the average price paid per unit.

31.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein rebating an overage corresponds to crediting an online account.

32.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein rebating an overage corresponds to not charging for additional product ordered until the overage is recovered.

33.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the rebating an overage corresponds to reducing the price for per unit of additional product ordered until the overage is recouped.

34.   (New) The system of claim 1, the virtual forum further comprises a bid modification component that updates the price curve associated with a bidding supplier in real time.

35.   (New) The system of claim 1, the virtual forum is configured to display in real time current best bids at each tier.

36.   (New) The system of claim 35, a best bid is based upon a price and another criterion.

37.   (New) The system of claim 1, further comprising a population component that automatically populates the price curve for a product.

38.   (New) The system of claim 37, the population component populates the price curve with data corresponding to a previously submitted bid.

39.   (New) The system of claim 38, the previously submitted bid was a winning bid.

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40.   (New) The method of claim 8, the bidding suppliers are a subset of the plurality of suppliers.

41.   (New) The method of claim 8, further comprising receiving updated bids from at least one of the bidding suppliers.

42.   (New) The method of claim 8, accepting the bid based on the lowest price and at least one other criterion.